

Article - Public Safety

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§8–203.

(a) The purpose of the Fund is to ensure adequate fire protection and rescue services in the State.

(b) A grant or loan awarded under this section shall be used only for purchasing, replacing, or improving:

(1) equipment, including elevated equipment, pumpers, tankers, ladder trucks, ambulances, rescue vehicles, or other large equipment used for fire fighting and emergency services;

(2) communications equipment;

(3) protective equipment, including helmets, turnout coats and pants, boots, eyeshields, gloves, and self-contained respiratory protection units;

(4) any other equipment necessary to carry out the ordinary functions of supporting fire fighting and rescue activities; or

(5) facilities used to house fire fighting equipment, ambulances, and rescue vehicles.

(c) (1) (i) A volunteer company receiving a grant from the Fund shall provide at least a 30% match of the amount of the grant.

(ii) If a volunteer company cannot reasonably provide the required match before the grant is disbursed, the Board of Public Works may waive the requirement or may allow repayment of the match within a reasonable time not exceeding 18 months after the purchase, replacement, or improvement of the equipment or facilities.

(2) (i) Money to provide the required match may include contributions from local government.

(ii) A local government may not reduce the amount of money that the volunteer company would otherwise be entitled to receive from the local government because of State money provided under this section.

(3) Loans from the Fund may only be awarded to assist with up to 75% of the total cost of the equipment or facilities being purchased.

(d) After a favorable recommendation from the Association, the Board of Public Works may award a grant, loan, or both from the Fund to a volunteer company if:

(1) for a grant award:

(i) an act of God or other unforeseen event substantially impairs the ability of the volunteer company to provide adequate and safe service; or

(ii) the volunteer company is unable to maintain the minimum level of performance for adequate and safe service established by standards of the Association because of a demonstrated lack of financial resources; and

(2) the Association and the volunteer company have executed an agreement that:

(i) provides that the grant or loan will be used as represented to the Board of Public Works in the request for approval; and

(ii) gives to the State security in the equipment or facilities purchased with the loan and in the proceeds of that equipment or those facilities as determined by the Board of Public Works to be appropriate and adequate.

(e) A grant or loan awarded under this section may not:

(1) be used to refinance a debt or other obligation of a volunteer company; or

(2) be spent to replace or repair eligible items to the extent that insurance proceeds are available for those purposes.

(f) The Board of Public Works may not approve a grant or loan from the Fund to a volunteer company if the volunteer company has not made a good faith effort to obtain money from its local government.

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